



Check Out-of-State Christmas trees and Décor for Elongate Hemlock Scale and Other Invasive Pests

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Contact: Morgan Cavitt, Public Information Officer, (608) 852-7438, morgancavitt@wisconsin.gov

MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) is reminding consumers to check for invasive pests before purchasing live out-of-state Christmas trees and holiday décor.

In previous years, plant health inspectors have intercepted cut trees and décor infested with invasive pests coming into Wisconsin from other states. The non-native, invasive pest known as the elongate hemlock scale (EHS) has been found multiple times on fir wreaths, Christmas trees, baskets, and boughs sourced from eastern states. EHS is a threat to Wisconsin’s Christmas trees, native hemlock, and balsam fir forests, and a quarantine rule has been proposed to prevent this pest from establishing in Wisconsin. Inspectors have also occasionally detected boxwood blight fungus and invasive bittersweet on wreaths, spongy moth egg masses on cut conifer trees, and dead spotted lanternflies on nursery stock.

“Since pests like EHS are not established in Wisconsin, the best way to prevent the establishment of these invasive pests is to make sure your tree or wreath was grown in a state without the pest,” said DATCP Bureau of Plant Industry Director Brian Kuhn. “It is important to check material carefully before bringing it home as a variety of pests and diseases can travel on plant material.”

To help protect Wisconsin’s natural resources and Christmas tree industry, check trees and wreaths for pests. To identify EHS, look for discolored needles and small brown, scale insects under oblong coverings on the underside of the needles. If you suspect EHS or other invasive pests on fir wreaths or Christmas trees, please take a photo and report it to DATCP’s pest hotline at (866) 440-7523 or datcppesthotline@wi.gov.

To learn more about EHS, visit https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/EHS.aspx and learn about other regulatory insects and diseases at <http://plantpests.wi.gov>.

Wisconsin is home to more than 375 licensed Christmas tree farms that sell trees, wreaths, garlands, and other décor. Choosing and cutting a live, fragrant tree every year is an ecofriendly way to support Wisconsin farmers while creating a fun family tradition. A list of cut-your-own and retail lots is available from the Wisconsin Christmas Tree Producers Association at <https://www.christmastrees-wi.org/map/>.

About DATCP’s Bureau of Plant Industry

DATCP’s Bureau of Plant Industry licenses approximately 2,000 nurseries and Christmas tree farms annually. The bureau works to control serious plant pests, diseases, and exotic species that threaten Wisconsin’s crops, forests, and plant communities.

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